

Department of Justice

High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project

Miami, Florida



Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) is working to improve long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project (“25 Cities”) to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected using criteria that included perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, Miami metropolitan area, local, state, and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

Participating Agencies

Partnership among Miami area local, state, and federal public safety agencies has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution sets. Participating agencies have included—

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
- City of Miami
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation
- Division of State Fire Marshals
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Florida Highway Patrol
- Internal Revenue Service
- Miami International Airport
- Miami-Dade County
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Port of Miami
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Marshals Service
- U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

Key Successes

DOJ and area stakeholders successfully achieved basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the Miami metropolitan area through the implementation of four interoperability solutions. These solutions support and upgrade the use of existing, disparate communications systems and interoperability resources by extending capacity and availability to more public safety agencies. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project’s interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to expand the working relationships among local, state, and federal agencies to resolve interoperability objectives for the area.

The first solution provided equipment to directly connect ATF, DEA, FBI, NPS, USCG, and USSS to the Miami-Dade County radio system. Two control stations were connected to each agency’s operating console to provide direct access to a locally used 800 megahertz (MHz) mutual-aid channel and the Miami-Dade County radio system. The mutual-aid channel acts as a hailing channel for participating federal agencies to contact the Miami-Dade dispatch center to request a console patch to agencies on the Miami-Dade County radio system.

The second solution provided control stations to connect DEA, FBI, and USSS to the City of Miami radio system. These additional control stations provide direct access to the City of Miami system without tying up Miami-Dade County radio system talk groups or resources.

The third solution provided equipment upgrades to ensure that the mobile audio switches in the Miami metropolitan area are capable of supporting interoperable communications with various radio systems. The upgrades included switch software, cables to connect radios to the switch, and laptop computers to control the switch. These upgrades ensure that all of the area’s mobile audio switches are ready for emergency use.

The fourth solution is a 350 watt Federal Interoperability VHF Repeater with 14 receiver sites affording on-street and mobile coverage in Dade and Broward counties. Agencies with P25 VHF radios will be able to access this channel, which can also be patched into the Miami-Dade and City of Miami 800 MHz radio systems. This repeater system is scheduled for installation in summer-fall, 2006.

In support of these solutions, operational assistance was provided through the development of standard operating procedures (SOP) to ensure effective and sustained use of the interoperability solutions. To coordinate common operating procedures for the new interoperability solutions, DOJ worked with the South Florida Interoperability Working Group, in addition to local, state, and federal agencies in the Miami metropolitan area. Additionally, training and communications exercise plans were provided so that agencies would better understand and subsequently address technical and operational deficiencies that may exist.

Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and DOJ WMO provided scalable solutions designed to give additional agencies access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with the area’s long-term interoperability plans, will ensure continuity in addressing interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the Miami metropolitan area.

Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative and the interoperability solutions, please contact—

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